

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following Listing of Claims replaces all prior listings of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method of killing microorganisms in aqueous systems or products based on water comprising adding a biocide to the system or product, wherein the biocide comprises from 0.001 to 5% by weight of at least one water-soluble or water-dispersible polymer comprising

- (a) from 30 to 98 mol% of styrenesulfonic acid,
- (b) from 2 to 40 mol% of an N-vinyl lactam, ~~N-vinylamine, or a mixture thereof,~~ and
- (c) from 0 to 30 mol% of free-radically polymerizable monomers, wherein the mol% is based on the total molar amount of monomer units present in the polymer, and the sum of (a), (b), and (c) totals 100 mol%.

2. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein all or some of the sulfonic acid groups are in salt form.

3. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the products based on water are aqueous dispersions.

4. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein the dispersion is electrostatically or ionically stabilized.

5. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein the dispersion is spray dried.

6. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the aqueous ~~industrial~~ systems are refrigeration or heat exchanger circuits.

7. (Currently amended) A method of protecting articles by applying an antimicrobial composition comprising water or a predominantly hydrous solvent mixture and a biocide to the article and removing the water or the predominantly hydrous solvent mixture, wherein the biocide is from 0.001 to 5% by weight of at least one water-soluble or water-dispersible polymer comprising

- (a) from 30 to 98 mol% of styrenesulfonic acid,
- (b) from 2 to 40 mol% of an N-vinyl lactam, ~~N-vinylamine, or a mixture thereof~~ and
- (c) from 0 to 30 mol% of free-radically polymerizable monomers, wherein the mol% is based on the total molar amount of all monomer units present in the polymer, and the sum of (a), (b), and (c) totals 100 mol%.

8. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the antimicrobial composition further comprises at least one binder.

9. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the antimicrobial composition further comprises a crosslinker or a system of crosslinkers.

10. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the water-soluble and water-dispersible polymer comprises 50 to 90 mol% ~~styrenesulfonic~~ styrenesulfonic acid, and 3 to 30 mol% N-vinyl lactam, ~~N-vinylamine or a mixture thereof~~.

11. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the free-radically ~~polymerizable~~ polymerizable monomers contain crosslinkable groups.

12. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 11 wherein the free-radically ~~polymerizable~~ polymerizable monomer is acetoacetoxyethyl methacrylate.

13. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein the free-radically ~~polymerizable~~ polymerizable monomer is present from 5 to 15 mol%.

14. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein the at least one water-soluble or water-dispersible polymer has a polydispersity M_w/M_n from 1.3 to less than 3.

15. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 7 wherein the water-soluble and water-dispersible polymer comprises 50 to 90 mol% ~~styrenesulfonic~~ styrenesulfonic acid, and 3 to 30 mol% N-vinyl lactam, ~~N-vinylamine or a mixture thereof~~.

16. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 7 wherein the free-radically ~~polymerizable~~ polymerizable monomers contain crosslinkable groups.

17. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 16 wherein the free-radically ~~polymerizable~~ polymerizable monomer is acetoacetoxyethyl methacrylate.

18. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 15 wherein the free-radically ~~polymerizable~~ polymerizable monomer is present from 5 to 15 mol%.

19. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 15 wherein the at least one water-soluble or water-dispersible polymer has a polydispersity M_w/M_n from 1.3 to less than 3.